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The Evolution of New Russia

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IT has been often said that there can be no peace if there is no peace in Russia. And the first question which you probably would like to ask me is whether there ever will be peace in Russia. For four years you have been accustomed to a state of never-ending civil war—people killing each other with no results at all but a continuation of the same wretched régime. When will the end come? Of course, nobody can foretell the whims of history. But history has also its general lines of development, and we can see more or less definitely that particular line which is now developing in Russia. We can judge of it by certain facts and try to make clear the meaning of these facts. We can draw conclusions and make comparisons, and that is the basis on which my discussion will be founded.

The first point that I should like to impress on you is that in Russia we have a real revolution, a process working in the large popular masses, a great change of mind which is now evolving as the result of this process. It is probably impossible for a nation to pass from the stage of medievalism to a higher level of existence without some kind of violent overthrow: such was the case with Great Britain and France. Russia had also to pass through her revolutionary period, and four years are not too many if you compare them with the stages of development of other revolutions. The French Revolution lasted for ten years; the first five years were the ascending movement, while the following five represented the descending movement. To make use of the comparison, we are now just approaching the turning

point in the process of Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks are at the end of their rope and there is no hope of their existing much longer. I cannot tell you all the reasons for this conclusion, but they can be summarized under two headings: the state of mind of the population and the destruction of the economic basis of existence.

THE STATE OF MIND IN RUSSIA

The general hatred against the Bolsheviks in all classes of the Russian population is the chief political result of four years of their rule. The Bolsheviks began by enlisting the people and outbidding all their competitors, and the nation believed them. The masses have now learned to know that Bolshevik promises are no good and that nothing can come out of them. The working men have become the chief enemies of Bolshevism because nothing has remained not only of such privileges as the working man received from the Bolsheviks but of the greater part of the privileges which he had before the Revolution. Labor is militarized now, and no workman has freedom to choose his place of work or his occupation. He must go wherever he is sent by the central authorities and he has to work as much as he is ordered. The eight-hour day which was introduced by the Russian Revolution does not exist any longer as a legal statute. The workman is obliged to work, if necessary, for ten, eleven or twelve hours a day. He has also to work on Saturday. If he neglects his work and does not do enough—and he is rated by piece work now—then what he has not done during the week-time he is obliged to do on Sunday.

It is still worse with the class of Russian farmers, those farmers which are the great majority of the Russian people—eighty-five per cent of the total population. From the very beginning they were looked upon as “small bourgeois” and the enemies of the “proletarian” revolution. There was no special reason for protecting their interests. It has been frequently said that the peasants got land from the Bolsheviks. That is not quite exact. The peasants had themselves taken the land from the landowners a few months before the Bolshevik victory. It is stated in the Bolshevik program that land must not be given to individual peasants. If the peasants are still in possession of that land, it is not because the Bolsheviks were strong enough to give it to them but because they were too weak to take it from them.

However, the Bolsheviks were obliged to take from the peasants their grain. They were forced to it because this was the only means for them to feed their army (which consists of from 600,000 to 1,000,000 gathered by conscription). They had also to feed their new Red bureaucracy, which, in consequence, has very much swollen in numbers, because everybody in Russia must serve under the Bolsheviks in order not to starve.

How did the Bolsheviks get food from the peasants? The peasant was ready to sell his grain for manufactured goods. But there were no more manufactured goods in Russia, as all industry had been killed. Why then should the peasants give their grain to the artisan population? The Bolsheviks decided to send armed detachments to the villages in order to take the grain from the peasants by force. The peasants stopped sowing and concealed their stores of grain. Then extreme measures were applied. Last

year everything the peasants had was taken from them. That is why you have now that desperate state of want in the famine-stricken area. Of course, one of the causes of the present famine was the dry season. But dry seasons occur regularly, while never has there been such a famine as there is now in Russia. The chief reason is that no stores of grain remain and there is nothing to fill up the gap left by this year's bad crops.

The result of all this is that the people, both working men and farmers, are exceedingly dissatisfied with the Bolshevik régime. There are always some uprisings in some corner of Russia. But, of course, they are not organized and the Bolsheviks have always been able to send their “Janizaries”—selected detachments of the Red army—in order to stifle these local upheavals. Yet they testify, nevertheless, that the Bolsheviks do not hold the confidence of the popular masses.

ECONOMIC FAILURE OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

Another reason to believe that Bolshevism is reaching its end is of still greater importance. This is the lack of economic basis for its further existence. The whole power of the Bolsheviks over selected groups of the Red army and Red bureaucracy is based on ability to give them food. But, as I have said, it is becoming more and more difficult to procure that food because the peasant stores are exhausted. Moreover, famine has become endemic in Russia.

You may ask me: If the Bolsheviks are going to fail, who will take their place? Different answers have been given to this question. Some people say there will be a reaction and Russian Monarchists will try to bring back the former order of things. That

kind of issue is eliminated by experience. During all these four years Russian Monarchists have been working to introduce the former order of things. But such attempts have only brought about the complete failure of armed struggle for Russia's liberation. The so-called "White armies" had considerable military success in the beginning, but invariably a great change would come, a hasty retreat and then evacuation. This is explained by the attempts of these White armies to introduce in Russia the former state of things. They brought with them former landowners and former administrators and as soon as the peasants saw these they changed their minds, deciding it would be worse than Bolshevism.

Of course, there are still some groups of former officers of the "White armies" who are being organized and helped with money, particularly by German reactionaries. Their aim is, as before, to make use of Russia for their own economic restoration. However, even if they should succeed in taking some part of Russia, the attempt would not amount to much because of the aforementioned state of mind of the Russian people. The masses would never submit to the reactionaries and this would only prolong the Revolution.

NO POSSIBILITY OF REVERSION TO ANARCHY

Some people say there is yet another possibility. Russia, if not made monarchist and brought back to its former state may revert to anarchy. Mr. H. G. Wells is responsible for that judgment and Mr. Lloyd George for repeating it in the House of Commons. Both, I think, are very much mistaken.

It is wrong to think that all the intellectuals in Russia have been thoroughly exterminated by the Bolshevik terror and that nothing is left beside an

amorphous mass of uneducated and unawakened people, unable to act politically. To prove that this is wrong, I will quote a fact universally known, the story of the Moscow Non-Communist Famine Committee.

The creation of this committee elicited such a reverberation, both inside and outside of Russia, that the Bolsheviks became frightened. Provincial branches of the Moscow committee sprang up everywhere and began to be regarded by the population as the organs of a new administration, intended to take the place of the Bolshevik organizations. Finally, the Bolsheviks decided to put a speedy end to an experiment which proved so dangerous for them.

You can see from this fact that even at present Russia is not a desert and that elements of organization can still be found wherever you go. You may find everywhere, by the side of destruction and ruin, germs of new life. Under that heavy cloak of Bolshevik uniformity Russia is alive and not dead, in spite of all her miseries and sufferings. You can see, therefore, how mistaken is the view that a state of anarchy and chaos is bound to follow when the bonds of Bolshevik power are removed. Elements of new power, the nuclei of new governmental structure, are to be found everywhere in the country and they can crystallize at any moment as liquid crystallizes under a certain degree of temperature.

Thus Russia will not return to monarchy and will not become anarchist. The two extremes, Red Bolshevism and Black reaction, are made impossible by history. Russia will be a great democracy. There are middle groups which are united and which work together to bring about that great result of the Russian Revolution.

Russia will be a federated republic. You know that Russia is now dismem-

bered. A number of border states have been built out of Russian territory. They will not come back if Russia attempts to dominate them as before. They can be brought back only on the basis of a free and friendly agreement under a new form of federative government. Of course, such an arrangement is not easy. The example of Mr. Lloyd George in Ireland shows how much small nations appreciate their independence and how much they are opposed to even the loosest forms of reunion. But there are certain geographical and economic ties which have united all parts of former Russia for centuries and which will bring them back together if national freedom and autonomy is fully secured. From a "colossus on feet of clay," an empire of the Eastern style, Russia will be transformed into a living compound of national and regional units, having come to a compact on the basis of equality, freedom and federal unity. Thus Russia will be healed of what was one of the chief causes of her constitutional weakness.

The new union will, of course, be loose in the beginning. But we have the example of America. In Philadelphia, in the summer of 1787, there first met an assembly which worked out the basis of the present Constitution, and you may recall how exceedingly difficult it was at the beginning to build one united nation. Now we see that great united nation before us. Russian history will develop in the same way and bring about the same achievement.

CONTRIBUTION OF A RUSSIAN REPUBLIC TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Now one question more: If Russia becomes a democratic and federated republic, what can Russia contribute to international peace? My answer is, in the first place, that the Russian people are naturally peaceful. You

may conceive that tendency of the Russian people if you think of your own Middle West: a territory which has no boundaries, no neighbors of foreign origin, and which has little to do with foreign politics. In the second place, there are in Russia no reasons for imperialism. What was the basis of this tendency in Germany and now in Japan? Over-population and over-production. These conditions do not exist in Russia. There is no over-population in Russia, no over-production of goods. The Russian people are in need of foreign capital to assist them. They have all necessary raw material at home, just as you have in America. Their huge continental block has resources sufficient to feed itself and to produce goods for itself; no matter how many goods it might produce, they would still not be sufficient to fill its own expanding market. So Russia has practically no reason for wishing to possess colonies or for adopting a colonial policy.

It must be said, also, that Russia is a young nation, practically as young as America. It would be wrong to represent Russia as an old country with an old population. There are centers which are very old, which have been settled since time immemorial, but they are only the nuclei of present Russia. The largest part of Russia was settled at nearly the same time as America, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its population which extends to the Far East is the result of that large stream of Russian settlement to the east. It is only since the seventeenth century that Russia has begun to settle Siberia and the process of settling Siberia is still going on at a rapid rate. In 1897, the population of Siberia was 9,000,000; in 1915, it was 14,000,000. Of this, the white population in 1897 was 5,000,000, and in 1915, 10,000,000—just double. If you will take only the eastern part of

Siberia (the part discussed at the Disarmament Conference¹ in Washington) you will see that in the same eighteen years the white population has increased almost five-fold. And it has not by far reached its natural degree of density.

Let me add a few words to show how much we Russians are interested in the Washington Conference. We are not imperialistic, but we may have a conflict with a power which we do consider imperialistic, and that is Japan. It is a conflict which will not originate in aggression on our part but which will result from such tendencies on the other side. During the time of our absence from the international tribunals, Japan, making use of our temporary weakness, took possession of certain parts of Russian Far East which do not belong to her and which are occupied by white population. The Japanese took the northern part of the Sakhalin Island. They took, also, the seashore opposite with a very good bay, De Castries, where they are now building a harbor. They took a town which dominates the estuaries of the Amur River—Nicolayevsk. Going still farther northward they took from the Russians the fishing grounds in the Okhotsk Sea and in Kamchatka. In that way they try to stop the Russian colonization on the Pacific Ocean. These colonies are the only white population in that region and form a kind of white girdle, uniting Europe with the Pacific. If this advance of the white race on the Pacific Ocean is precluded, Russia, in case of necessity, will be unable to extend her hand to America across the Pacific.

¹ Conference on the Limitation of Armament. Washington, D. C. November 11, 1921.

AMERICA'S SYMPATHY WITH RUSSIA'S EVOLUTION

The policy of the United States toward Russia at this hour of her trial is so noble and unselfish, that we Russians believe that nothing can ever destroy the American-Russian friendship. In a series of declarations, America defended the principle that the interests of a nation must not be impaired in the temporary absence of its government. And if the foundation for universal peace is to be preserved, a country like Russia cannot be neglected in her vital interests.

The Russians appreciate deeply this attitude of the United States. In the War they sacrificed 7,000,000 men for the common Allied cause. In spite of the fact that Bolshevism is the result of Russia's exhaustion in the struggle for the common cause, there were some who dared to call her traitor, after she unwillingly abandoned the battlefields on which many times during the War she had saved the European democratic civilization. America alone was never heard to make or support such unjust statements. This fact may further explain Russia's friendship and respect for America.

Russia has never had such a famine as she has now. Millions there are dying. But again the Americans are at hand, the only ones, to save the lives of these millions. Down to the last peasant in the remotest corner of Russia the population knows and appreciates this. We feel this is the greatest hope for friendship between the two great democracies, for we believe that Russia will be a great democracy and will deserve a place at the side of America.